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Comment on the reported Republican proposal for a "Formosa resolution" on Cuba

It would not appear to be enough to say a resolution "like the Formosa resolution." Formosa is 9000 miles away. Cuba is 90 miles away. The problem in Formosa was to keep a remote area out of hostile hands. The problem in Cuba is that it is a neighborly land which has been in hostile hands since the years of the Eisenhower administration and which we need to try to get back among the good neighbors of the Western Hemisphere.

A resolution authorizing the President to use armed forces against Cuba in present circumstances seems to imply that the Republicans want a military attack -- an aggressive act, a warlike act, against the island, with American troops. What else can it imply? Thousands of Cubans will die in such an attack and untold numbers of Americans. Is that what is wanted? In the case of Formosa the resolution had only defensive connotations. If a resolution on Cuba is going to be couched in the same framework as the Formosan resolution, if it is going to be "like a Formosa resolution," it would be necessary to say that Congress authorizes the President to use the armed forces to defend the United States against an attack by Cuba. Does the Congress think the President needs to be reminded by Congressional resolution to defend the United States against military attack from Cuba?

Actually, no resolution by Congress was necessary to authorize armed President Eisenhower to use forces to defend Formosa where the United States had legal responsibilities and commitments remaining from World War II. He could have done it on his own if necessary. Many members voted for the Formosa resolution only because President Eisenhower was apparently uncertain of his constitutional authority and wanted Congress to uphold his hand. Democrats were glad to give him the support which he felt he needed. President Kennedy is not uncertain of his responsibilities under the Constitution and has not asked Congress to uphold his hand. If he feels that need, there is no doubt that he will ask for a resolution and I have no doubt that the Congress will give it to him.

A resolution of the Formosa type in the Cuban situation, however, -- and no doubt this proposal is well-intentioned -- well-intentioned/ would serve at this time only to meddle with the President's authority in the conduct of a most delicate aspect of our foreign relations which has ramifications far beyond Cuba -- in all of Latin America, in Europe and in Asia, as well. [We would do better to concentrate on the legislative problems of the American people and leave these matters to the President.]

If the Republican leadership wishes to help rather than hinder in this situation and perhaps precipitate the loss of untold numbers of American lives in an invasion of Cuba, then the best thing it can do is to strike from this proposed resolution any reference to the use of

armed forces which the President is already empowered to use under the Constitution to defend the United States and to carry out its legitimate obligations. The resolution would be confined to a condemnation of recent trends in Cuba, an expression of support for the President in this most difficult situation which he inherited when he took office, and a proposal for a study of the situation by the Foreign Relations Committee as the able members of that Committee see fit to study it with a view to bringing Cuba back into the inter-American system of friendly neighbors.

The Cuban situation is a foreign policy responsibility at this point. ~~It is a Presidential responsibility. The Republican members cannot relieve him of that responsibility.~~ ^{responsibility} It is not the ~~constitutional~~ ^{responsibility} ~~course but a meddling~~ course to authorize the President to do by Congressional resolution what he is already authorized to do by the Constitution: to command the armed forces of the United States and to conduct its foreign relations. ~~It is~~ a course which could jeopardize the peace and the security of the United States.